

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A container for packaging perishable food items comprising:

a tubular body portion formed of molded thermoplastic polymer having an arcuate top portion extending along a length of said body portion, two ends disposed on opposite ends of the arcuate top, and a bottom having a rectangular shaped flat portion, and having an undulating profile at each side of said flat portion forming a trough, ~~wherein said flat portion and said trough extend between said opposite ends,~~ said tubular body portion having a cross-section suitable for holding a perishable food item, wherein at least a portion of said tubular body is transparent;

one end of said body portion being closed and the other end of said body portion having an open mouth, wherein said flat portion and said trough extend from said one end to said other end; and

said open mouth is adapted to be sealed.

2. – 5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously presented) The container according to Claim 1 further comprising a heat sealable film for sealing said open mouth.

7. (Previously presented) The container according to Claim 1 further comprising an endcap for sealing said open mouth.

8. (Original) The container according to Claim 7 wherein said endcap is attached to the body of the container by friction-fit or a tack-weld.

9. (Original) The container according to Claim 7 wherein said endcap is attached to the body of the container by screw threads

10. (Original) The container according to Claim 1 wherein indicia is affixed to said container.

11. (Original) The container according to Claim 1 wherein said at least a portion of said tubular body is opaque.

12. (Original) The container according to Claim 1 further comprising a lip projecting radially from the periphery of said mouth opening.

13. (Original) The container according to Claim 1 wherein the interior of said tubular body portion is coated with an anti-fogging agent.

14. (Previously presented) The container according to Claim 1 wherein an atmosphere of said container is manipulated to increase the oxygen content thereof.

15. – 19. (Canceled)

20. (Previously presented) The container according to Claim 14 wherein said atmosphere is selected from oxygen, carbon dioxide, nitrogen, carbon monoxide, and blends of the foregoing gases.

21. (Previously presented) The container according to Claim 1 wherein the perishable food item is disposed in the container, the perishable food item comprising fresh red meat.

22. (Previously presented) The container according to Claim 21 wherein said meat is disposed on said flat bottom of the container such that a capacity of the container is only partially filled with said meat so that said meat is recessed from said arcuate top.

23. (Previously presented) The container according to Claim 21 wherein a volume of said meat is between 50% and 75% of the capacity of the container.

24. (Previously presented) The container according to Claim 21 wherein said meat is disposed on said flat bottom of the container in spaced apart relation to said arcuate top.

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25. (Previously presented) The container according to Claim 1 wherein the perishable food item is disposed in the container, the perishable food item comprising fresh red meat, and wherein a heat sealable film seals said open mouth.

26. (Previously presented) The container according to Claim 1 wherein the tubular body portion defines outwardly sloping sides.

27. (Previously presented) The container according to Claim 1 wherein an interior of said tubular body portion is coated with an anti-fogging agent.

28. (Previously Presented) The container according to Claim 1 wherein said open mouth has a cross-section that is substantially equal to that of said tubular body portion.